

Message Text

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ACTION HA-05

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 DPW-01 IO-13 AID-05 /081 W
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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO USMISSION GENEVA
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
SECSTATE WASHDC 7211

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 36805

FOLLOWING TEL SENT ACTION BANGKOK INFO VIENTIANE FROM UDORN
28 DEC 77 REPEATED FYI:

QTE
C O N F I D E N T I A L UDORN 0220

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SREF TH LA
SUBJECT: BUNG KAN REFUGEE SITUATION

REF: UDORN 0218/219 AND PREVIOUS

1. TO OBTAIN AN UPDATE ON BUNG KAN REFUGEE SITUATION
CONREP TRAVELLED DECEMBER 27 TO DISTRICT TOWN AND SEVERAL
POINTS BEYOND WHERE HMONG (MEO) REFUGEES HAVE BEEN
ENTERING DISTRICT AFTER FORDING MEKONG RIVER.

2. CONREP INTERVIEWED DISTRICT POLICE CHIEF WHO STATED
THAT REVISED TOTAL NUMBER OF HMONG REFUGEES WHO HAVE FLED
TO DISTRICT SINCE MID-NOVEMBER IS 516. HE SAID THAT LATEST
GROUP OF HMONGS TO ARRIVE WAS SMALL GROUP OF 16 WHO CROSSED
INTO DISTRICT AT NONG DOEN THA VILLAGE, IN VICINITY OF
COORDINATES UF9270, DECEMBER 20. (FROM POLICE CHIEF AND
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OTHER SOURCES WE HAVE LEARNED THAT TWO OTHER ENTRY POINTS
INTO DISTRICT USED BY HMONG REFUGEES ARE BUNG KHLA
TOWNSHIP, IN VICINITY OF COORDINATES UF9523, AND HAT HAE
VILLAGE, IN VICINITY OF COORDINATES VF 0015).

3. DISTRICT POLICE CHIEF ADDED THAT, ACCORDING TO TWO
HMONG REFUGEES HIS MEN INTERCEPTED

DECEMBER 21, THERE ARE TWO ADDITIONAL GROUPS OF HMONGS, TOGETHER TOTALLING APPROXIMATELY 300, WHO ARE WAITING FOR AN OPPORTUNE MOMENT TO CROSS MEKONG RIVER AND ENTER DISTRICT AT NONG DOEN THA AND HAT HAE VILLAGES.

4. HOWEVER, DISTRICT POLICE CHIEF CLAIMED THAT HE HAS TAKEN SEVERAL MEASURES TO DISCOURAGE ANY FURTHER INFLUX OF HMONGS. HE HAS ORDERED ALL BOATS AT NONG DOEN THA VILLAGE OUT OF WATER AND HAS POSTED POLICE GUARDS TO SECURE THEM AT NIGHT. (HMONG REFUGEES HAD PREVIOUSLY HIRED OWNERS OF THESE BOATS TO FERRY THEM ACROSS MEKONG.) POLICE CHIEF STATED THAT HE HAS ORDERED POLICE GUARDS TO FIRE THEIR WEAPONS INTO AIR IF THEY OBSERVE HMONGS TRYING TO CROSS RIVER. PURPOSE OF GUNFIRE IS TO FRIGHTEN HMONGS AS WELL AS TO ALERT LPDR SECURITY PATROLS ON OTHER SIDE OF MEKONG THAT AN ATTEMPTED CROSSING IS UNDERWAY.

5. HE MAINTAINED THAT HE HAS REFUSED BRIBE ATTEMPTS BY HMONGS TO SECURE ENTRY INTO DISTRICT FOR FELLOW TRIBESMEN WAITING ACROSS MEKONG. HE SAID THAT HE HAS ALSO DENIED HMONG REQUESTS TO PERMIT ONLY WOMEN AND CHILDREN TO SEEK REFUGE IN DISTRICT.

6. DISTRICT POLICE CHIEF HAD LITTLE TO SAY REGARDING FUTURE PLANS FOR DISPOSITION OF HMONG REFUGEES WHO HAVE RECENTLY FLED TO BUNG KAN. HOWEVER, HE COMPLAINED THAT PRESENCE

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OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM OTHER ORGANIZATIONS INTERESTED IN HMONGS, SUCH AS GOVERNOR'S OFFICE, SECOND RTA FORWARD HEADQUARTERS IN SAKHON NAKHON, AND NONG KHAI PROVINCIAL ISOC CENTER, MAKES IT DIFFICULT FOR HIM TO EFFECTIVELY DISCHARGE HIS RESPONSIBILITY FOR CLASSIFYING THESE REFUGEES INTO "POLITICAL" AND "ECONOMIC" CATEGORIES.

7. (A POLICE SOURCE TOLD CONREP DURING EARLIER TRIP TO BUNG KAN THIS MONTH THAT DISTRICT POLICE'S CLASSIFICATION OF INITIAL GROUP OF 220 HMONG REFUGEES SENT TO PROVINCE DETENTION CENTER AS "ECONOMIC REFUGEES", WHICH WOULD SUBJECT THEM TO POSSIBLE FORCIBLE REPATRIATION TO LAOS, WAS OVERRULED BY GOVERNOR'S OFFICE. LATTER REPORTEDLY RECLASSIFIED HMONGS AS "POLITICAL" REFUGEES MAKING THEM ELIGIBLE FOR EVENTUAL ENTRY INTO UNHCR SUPPORTED REFUGEE CAMP.)

8. POLICE CHIEF INDICATED THAT PRESENCE OF SOME OUTSIDE REPRESENTATIVES, I. E. SECOND RTA AND ISOC REPS, HAVE TO DO WITH RTG'S COVERT ALBEIT MODEST ASSISTANCE TO HMONG RESISTANCE ELEMENTS. HE EXPRESSED VIEW THAT RTG SHOULD ESTABLISH A COHERENT NATIONAL

POLICY REGARDING LAO RESISTANCE ACTIVITIES AND LET ONLY ONE AGENCY HANDLE IT.

9. CONREP ALSO INTERVIEWED IN DISTRICT TOWN A RECENTLY ARRIVED 48 YEAR OLD HMONG REFUGEE WHO CLAIMED TO HAVE BEEN A MAJOR IN THE 225TH BATTALION, ONE OF THE UNITS IN HMONG GENERAL VANG PAO' ARMY. THIS SOURCE GAVE FOLLOWING BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF RECENT EVENTS IN PHU MA THAO AREA. FROM ORIGINAL GROUP OF 7500 HMONG LIVING IN AND AROUND PHU MA THAO,UF9864, ABOUT 1500 HAVE SUCCUMBED TO POLITICAL AND MILITARY OPERATIONS CONDUCTED BY LPDR AND HAVE ACKNOWLEDGED VIENTIANE'S NEW RULE. HE CLAIMED THAT 500 HMONGS HAVE FLED TO THAILAND. HE SAID THAT 52 HMONGS HAVE BEEN KIA IN CLASHES WITH LPDR TROOPS AND 225 HMONGS HAVE DIED FROM LACK OF FOOD AND OTHER
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NECESSITIES.

10. SOURCE CONCLUDED THAT REMAINING 5000 HMONGS ARE STILL RESISTING LPDR SUPPRESSION EFFORTS BUT THAT THEIR SITUATION IS PRECARIOUS WITH LITTLE OR NO HOPE OF IMPROVEMENT. HE STATED THAT MOST OF REMAINING HMONGS HOPE TO ESCAPE TO THAILAND.
FINNEY UNQTE
WHITEHOUSE

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